

Duxbury



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Town clerk Nancy Oates listens intently as Allen Bornheimer (l), Town Moderator, confers with former Town Moderator Charles Fargo, who acted as Moderator during the discussion and voting on Article 10 to transfer the Library to the Upper Alden School Building and to appropriate funds for the renovation project. The article passed. ...

Photo by Fran Nichols

Library Move to Upper Alden Approved

By SUSANNA SHOHAM

Town Meeting voted 746 to 103 in favor of moving the existing Duxbury Free Library to the Upper Alden School at a cost of \$3 million.

"The time is now to get a \$6 million jewel on the hill for \$3 million," said Edward O'Sullivan, chairman of the Finance Committee, which unanimously supported Article 10.

This article required a two-thirds majority to pass, and voters debated its merits for more than 2 hours Saturday afternoon.

A total of \$6.3 million is required to renovate the 1927 Alden School and create a 33,000-square-foot library, more than triple the space of the current one. In addition to the \$3 million approved by Town Meeting, the Alden Library Project committee has filed an application for a \$2.1 million state grant and hopes to raise over \$900,000 in private funds.

Article 10 contained a contingency that stated no borrowing can occur unless the town receives the state grant or sufficient funds become available from other sources.

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However, the town is "well poised" to receive the grant, said Deborah Bornheimer, chairman of the Alden Library Project committee.

"I don't want to sound cocky, but the (state) Board of Library Commissioners has asked us this afternoon to FAX the results of this vote," said Deborah. Duxbury would not have been eligible for the grant unless the project was approved by 2-thirds majority vote at Town Meeting.

In her presentation, Deborah said "there is an overwhelming need and an urgency" for a new library because the current one on St. George St. has "clearly outgrown the space."

The library building, given to the town in 1909 by the Wright family, was designed for a collection of 60,000 items to serve 5,000 people. Currently, it holds more than 80,000 items for a population of 14,000.

Also, the library has outdated utilities, no sprinkler system, no central air conditioning and no handicapped facilities, said Jane Bradley, chairman of the Board of Library Trustees.

Plans for the library at the Upper Alden School include space for 2 meeting rooms, an art gallery, a 5,100-square foot children's library, expanded reference and non-fiction sections, and 35 computer stations.

Upper Alden was given by the School Committee to the town 3 years ago because of declining enrollment. It retained the Lower Alden School, which can accommodate 700 students, said chairman Betsy Sullivan.

Proponents of the project urged Town Meeting to take advantage of "a bargain that cannot be passed up," said Edward O'Sullivan. He explained that the cost of the library would not have any affect on the tax rate because its debt begins in fiscal year 1998, and at that time "it will replace current debt that is on the books." The debt payments for the Chandler School will end in the next year.

"Duxbury is a first-class town and it ought to have a first-class library," said William Zachmann of Standish St.

"You can learn a lot about a community by its public library," said Frank LeBart of Oceanwoods Drive, adding that with this project Duxbury had the "opportunity to preserve 2 historic buildings, Upper Alden and the library." LeBart, chairman of a committee studying locations for a youth center, said the vacant library building would be a good home for a teen center, the Council on Aging and the Recreation Department.

However, the future use of the existing library building worried Ruth Rowley of Washington St. and a Board of Health member.

"A measure of a town is often how it treats its gifts," Ruth said. The town "must honor the past."

The terms of the gift of the library building specify that it must be used for a library or a related function or it may revert back to the Wright family heirs.

Town Counsel Robert Troy assured town meeting that town officials will "take all appropriate action" to make sure the building remains in the town's custody. "The vote does not in any way jeopardize the current library," he added.

If the state grant is awarded and other funding raised, the Upper Alden building could be ready by the fall of 1996.



Deborah Bornheimer (l), head of the Development Committee for the Duxbury Free Library sits with Acting Library Director Joanne Lamothe and Jane Bradley (r), Chairman of the Library Trustees at Town Meeting on Saturday, March 11.